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Community College  
Volume 3 Number 1



*The*  
*Final Draft*

Spring 1993



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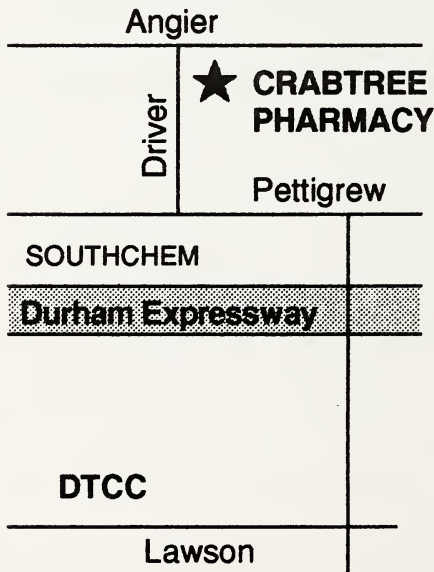
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To all the talented writers who  
submitted their work for this issue.

## DEDICATION

This issue is dedicated to Barbara Wolf Pearce  
whose enthusiasm, expertise, and support has  
been a cherished source of inspiration.





# *The Final Draft*

*The Final Draft*  
is the literary magazine of  
Durham Technical Community College  
1637 Lawson St. 318-A Phillips Building,  
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## SUNSET AT ATLANTIC BEACH

Footsteps lead off into the unknown,  
melting away at the water's edge.  
Like an eraser wiping its chalk board clean.  
Nomads wander by to leave new traces.  
Castles of grand importance left for ruin.  
Only an impression will remain tomorrow.  
White cottony clouds bellow far  
in the blue swept sky.  
The pale moon rises full,  
as the orange sun falls helpless behind.  
The clash of waves echoes  
through and through and through,  
drowning the screams of seagulls,  
fighting for leftover bait.  
The smell of salt pierces the nose.  
The night checks the blue,  
a black line at the water's horizon creeps  
closer and closer and closer  
until only the white caps  
of the breakers can be seen.  
A swift warm breeze on its way  
to some other  
destination blows energetically.  
I wonder where it comes from.

John Ervin

I dream, but I am awake.  
I see, I feel, I smell, I hear.  
I run through the canyons.  
I jump over rock and shrub.  
I move swift and powerful, like no man.  
I see You sitting on a log with Your back to me.  
I can see Your black hair shining.  
I run towards You and jump high.  
I see You throw the bird in the air.  
I become the bird and fly away.  
I soar through the air.  
I look everywhere and see everything.  
I glide through the valleys and peaks.  
I land on a small hill and change.  
I move close to the ground.  
I smell the ground and smell everything.  
I follow Your scent down the trail.  
I do not find You till nightfall.  
I see Your firelight in the distance.  
I move quietly toward it.  
I see You teaching others of the Old Ways.  
I stay out of the firelight.  
I sit: I watch, I learn, I remember.

Ed Foster

As I walked along the sun-baked valley,  
a feather lay on the ground  
along my path.

By reaching down to pick it up,  
a motion in the heavens caught my eye.

There you were, making your  
impressive circles in the sky, the wind  
sleeking back your feathers, and the  
sunlight flashing from  
your golden wings.

It was then I realized that had I not  
noticed the small detail of a feather,  
I would have walked on,  
unaware of your magnificence  
soaring high above me, and I knelt  
down upon the hardened clay to  
thank the Great Spirit with my tears.

Bonnie Dalziel

## NO HUNTERS ALLOWED

Mr. Jones used to be a real nice man until the morning of September 7, 1992; it was the opening day of deer season in North Carolina. You could hear the hounds barking as they chased deer through the thick brush. When the deer came out of the bottom of March Creek, they headed up the hill to Mr. Jones' land. When the deer reached the barbed wire fence, they cleared it with ease but the dogs had to go under it. Now the hunters came racing up the hill in their four wheelers sliding to a stop. When they opened the gate, Dave and Sam jumped back on their four wheelers speeding away without closing the gate, fishtailing all the way up the heavy, dew laden hill. When they reached the top, they ran right into a cornfield mowing down several rows of corn. Next the hunters came to a cow pasture and with no gate in sight Dave pulled out a pair of wire pliers and cut the wire. Still in hot pursuit of the dogs and deer, they never took the time to right the wrongs that they were doing. Finally, the guys rounded a curve and ran into Mr. Jones' turkey coop killing two gobblers and one hen. When Mr. Jones stepped out of the coop, his brow wrinkled and with a disgusted look on his face he said, "Boys, it ain't turkey season yet!" Then he called the sheriff and posted his land.

George King

## LET YOURSELF

Dreams left unattended  
soon wither on the vine.  
A heart left all unwanted  
is the saddest thing you'll find.  
A love left unaccepted  
soon hides behind a wall.  
a wish left still unspoken  
can't do anything but fall.  
So if you have a dream  
and maybe a wish or two  
fill you heart with love  
so they'll all come true for you.  
For dreams are made for dreaming,  
and wishes can be real.  
Don't hide - but let yourself be loved  
and then your heart will heal.

Betty Lewis

## A MOTHER'S DAY POEM

Dedicated to my mother

Is it nature or a cosmic strain that binds  
a mother and daughter's love?

It is neither defined nor understood,  
but powerful and wise.

Victorious is this conqueror of  
connecting the souls of one who loved  
and bared a new generation.

Upon this gift of life,  
the two will form one bond  
and shall remain the same as  
one beam of light to one source,  
one breath upon one lung,  
one tone from one song.

This the eternal and unconditional love  
that is never learned by experience  
but is transformed from  
one heart to one life.

Nancy E. Crickenberger

## FOR TREVOR. FOR MY CHILD

There are days when I look at Trevor  
and I recall the unwanted pain  
of a pregnant girl who planned  
her future  
and left the father in the past,  
and Trevor holds me and I know  
fulfillment beyond belief.

There are days when I look at Trevor  
and I fear disappointing him,  
but when I tuck him in at night  
he still kisses me even when I  
know I let him down.

There are days when I look at Trevor  
and it amazes me how someone so  
much a part of me is so separate  
from me. I remind myself he  
belongs to God.

There are days when I look at Trevor  
and I wonder if I will make it  
through the day and Trevor smiles at  
me and he has no doubt.

There are days when Trevor looks at me  
and I am at peace because  
he does not see the girl who  
carried him. He sees a woman,  
his mother, and he loves her.  
These days are the best days.

Sonya Hall



## AN UNPERFECT PICTURE

Snow covered fields lay against  
a backdrop of white-topped mountains  
and stark blue sky.

The glimpse of a deer.  
Searching, as many do,  
for something that hasn't been taken.

Her fleeting tracks  
leave a delicate pattern  
of unsure feet in snowdrifts.

And I watch,  
safely tucked away;  
warm, content.

I stand in awe  
of its beauty.  
A beautiful scene,  
yet, unmasked, a hard  
and brutal winter.

Tisha Bundy

## THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE WORLD TODAY

The seriousness of the world today-  
Makes it hard to look at the real world-  
But the one person who dares to try-  
Is smothered by the world's arrogance-

The wars, the crime, the greed, the hate-  
All contribute to the cloud of sobriety-  
But if the one person dares again-  
The cloud descends upon him and smothers-

As long as that person continues to try-  
Even if the world continues to shut him out-  
He will have the satisfaction of success-  
Because he knows he never gave up-

Jay Causey

## SON OF ST. THOMAS

Tony, they buried you  
on an ugly clay hillside,  
far from your home in  
the caribbean—  
where the sun spills through  
early morning clouds,  
across crackling palms  
onto sugary beaches crowded  
with tourists waiting for evening,  
to hear your piano  
in the clubs nestled post-card perfect  
among the bougainvillea  
and warm winter air.

When I met you  
in the city of medicine, your skin  
was still creamy island brown,  
and you had a lovely, slow smile  
despite the IV planted in your chest.  
How quietly you slipped from the room,  
ever fearful of disturbing others  
when that shocking cough  
came upon you.

On our last evening together  
you bought a dozen fried won-tons  
for your friends in the hospice  
closer to death than you.  
Proudly you bore them back,  
oriental flavor filling the car  
as we smoked cigarettes  
against doctor's orders,  
and discussed the joy of living.  
A few months later you  
followed your friends.

This clay does not contain you.  
I prefer to think of you  
floating peacefully, adrift  
in harmonic clearness,  
surrounded by the waters of your home.  
Standing on the hill, I'm glad,  
to have held you close that night,  
licked your spoon in the ice cream shop,  
and asked you to stay a  
few moments longer.

Stewart Aycock

## (SHORES OF) LONELINESS

Starting at the sea, you watch each untamed wave crash against the shore with a violent and horrible noise. The sun colors and illuminates the action like a cruel crayon. You wait for nothing but the expected to happen, and out of nothingness comes nothingness. The distant chants of small children playing taunt like a frustrating hide-and-seek game where in all cases what is lost cannot be recaptured. The clouds above become a familiar canvas that hangs like a broken windchime no longer inciting or inviting. The dust beneath your feet feels soft and comfortable but deceives as it gets between your toes and under your nails and becomes agitating (murderous?) And the delusions and fantasies that once motivated are now dead and limp like unknown soldiers, all they ever did anyway was to allow for more minutes and hours and days, perhaps even years. But where is time now? Time is lost somewhere between the waves and chants and clouds and grains of sand and has become meaningless. And you, the solitary figure are jailed by thought, like a victim of hypnosis. The clouds become darker and darker one by one as it begins to rain loneliness.

Chris Bowen

## LONELY SONG

The night was cold with sliver light  
that shone from stars above,  
a soul alone stood waiting there,  
a soul in search of love.

The spirits rode on dark night winds,  
flying through the air,  
as gently, oh so gently they caressed  
her long dark hair.

They felt the lonely heart within  
her gentle grieving soul,  
for always she'd been threatened by  
a world so dark and cold.

In this life she'd given her heart,  
her love, her all.  
And in return was pain and hurt--  
in her heart the rain did fall.

As she stands alone and  
her soul begins to sing,  
a song of love and longing  
borne by dark night wings.

With loneliness and pain  
the stars echo her song,  
the spirits stop to listen and  
with tears they sing along.

Her song is filled with pain,  
hurt and loneliness again  
Such a lonely song, if ever heard,  
would break the hearts of men.

Betty Lewis

My husband doesn't see me  
across this empty room.  
He only sees his nagging conscience,  
and hears me ask,  
"Where have you been?"  
A chair smashes against a bare wall.  
It's supposed to make a sound  
as it crumbles apart.  
But, sound becomes mute in slow motion.  
Only the crunch of carpet  
beneath his work worn boots  
can break the sound barrier.  
My husband's boots toll like bells,  
of what is about to come.  
And yet, he seems somewhat  
perversely graceful  
gliding across the carpet towards me.  
Backhanding objects out of his path.  
My husband's tongue is wild like a snake  
held back by bars of clinched teeth.  
I assume the position taught to me,  
while as a child, crouched behind the couch,  
I watched my father deal with his conscience.  
My husband pulling me up,  
pounding, Pounding, POUNDING,  
his finger into my breast bone.  
Digging, trying to find my soul  
so as if to squeeze it like a tick  
and watch it drip off his finger tips.  
But, I hide my soul,  
each time I hear  
the ringing of the bells.  
It is all I've ever had,  
nor ever will,  
that is mine and only mine.



It's guarded by that little girl,  
who huddles behind a couch,  
in a dark room of my mind.  
My husband's hand slices through the air,  
bringing with it the scent of beer  
and someone else's perfume.

"SLAP"

The heat from his hand burns my cheek  
and the coldness of his wedding ring  
stings the corner of my eye.  
The wall tastes like chalk,  
as my lips and tongue slide down it.  
My husband helps me up  
with laced fingers wrapped around my neck.  
Now I take refuge in the blackness  
that soon wraps around me  
like a huge ace bandage.  
It is here, in this hell delivered sanctuary,  
I sit cradling a child, behind an old couch,  
who is frightened by the sound of bells.  
As sobs become louder,  
I awake to realize,  
it is my crying husband whom I cradle  
and with shaking hands I dry his eyes.

Laura L. Hufton

## THERE IN THE SILENT, SLEEPY MEADOW

There, in the silent, sleepy meadow we  
stood-

Listening to choirs of birds singing hymns of  
comfort-

Flowers were exploding with beauty around  
us-

There was no movement, there was only  
silence-

The rays of sunlight warmed us like an old  
woodstove-

But even the sun could not break through  
the blackness-

And rivers and streams flowed from the  
meadow-

Taking with them the pain and sorrows-

The earth wept along with us-

Even though there was deathly calm-

For as God wrapped his loving arms around  
him-

He celebrated a new birth and was sorrowful  
no more-

We left the meadow with one less member-

Not knowing we would return soon after-

For his wife missed and loved him so-

She visited often to that place and one day  
joined it-

Worry, pain, suffering, they all led to her  
meadow-  
Where the exploding flowers returned once  
more-  
The birds, once again sang their sorrowful  
song-  
While the rivers and streams flowed once  
more-

The two came together so very long ago-  
Never to part they promised each other-  
The reaper separated the two-  
but they never were apart-  
But now the two are eternally bound-

Jay Causey

## THE EMPRESS

Inside the box is the mind  
of blindness and cold  
it is safe behind the glassy lens,  
giving little and showing nothing.

For a moment hatred will succeed  
an empress of closed emotion.  
It is a light she sees  
but acknowledges darkness;  
hears a word  
but doesn't comprehend;  
feels a touch  
but turns to stone.

As the encircle of output  
turns back to shut the door,  
it's out there,  
the world she will deny  
a life,  
deny herself.

Soon the tomb becomes  
a padded prison of security.  
The womb is warm and dry.  
As long as she can build the self  
around the self.

Nancy E. Crickenberger

The desert . . .  
a dry hot lonely wilderness  
    consumes my soul  
drowning in the sea  
    of uncertainty  
kicking, fighting, grasping  
    for the unknown  
where is the peace  
. . . the fulfillment of my destiny  
starving in a land of plenty  
my whole being longs  
    to know you  
and in knowing you comes  
the desert  
. . . the holy paradox  
intimacy through desolation  
consecration through annihilation  
"Rid me of this rain self"  
    I cry  
yet I am bitter 'cos of self denial  
to be full of you  
    is to die to self.

Cindy Wells

## EL PROFESOR

(Para Jack, muchas gracias mi amigo.)

Last night as class was coming to an end  
you sang a Spanish love song  
playing the old-world melody  
with surprising tenderness  
on your guitar.

I was filled as a  
cherished mug of brightly-painted pottery  
must be when men with your  
voice pour the old wine in Seville.

Energy and compassion harmonize  
in your compact frame,  
waves of cunning humor  
break and roll from your  
salty tongue as you sprint  
from desk to blackboard.  
The music of being surges through you.

I dream of learning as a means  
to pleasure, of wandering  
crooked alleyways romantic in  
tile and white-washed plaster,  
breathing the spicy atmosphere  
and grinning deep to see the banner  
of your refrain across the azure sky.

Perhaps you sang because you know  
that there are many such as I who wait  
with our cupped hands outstretched  
eager to receive the notes you pour,  
that resonate clearly  
from your brimming pitcher.

Stewart Aycock

# WINNING THE LOTTERY

By Willie Moore

Twenty years in the insurance business, and I had always hated this part of the job. For the third time in a week, I found myself paying off a claim. 5103-A Bunker Blvd. was on the northside of town. When I was a child, I used to think of the northside as paradise. It is now a cold and insensitive place. The beautiful rainbow-colored landscape of red, orange, green, and purple are forever gone. There are no more wild and vast wooded areas for a young adventurer to explore. The fresh spring air has been replaced with lung-burning smog. Air pollution has taken over the sweet and soothing fragrance of an assortment of flowers, such as sunflowers, lackspurs, daisies, morning glories, phloxes, and honeysuckles. The fruity and mouth-watering smells of apple, peach, plum, and orange trees are just a part of my distant memory.

The old neighborhood is now full of shopping malls and large apartment buildings. The beautiful trees have been cut down to make room for revolving door-like parking lots. Years ago the northside was a very nice place to live, but now it's known for its night clubs and criminal statistics. There was talk during the last city council election about tearing down most of the area; which is now mostly made up of condemned buildings and rat infested buildings that should be condemned.

5103-A Bunker Blvd. was a small wooden, faded gray shack with chipped paint, and discolored rotten wood. It had broken windows which had been repaired with plywood and it had security bars on the doors and windows. I wasn't sure I had found the right place. The weeds in the yard were two or three feet high, and piles of trash, tires and other car



parts were covering the entire lawn. I had to remove large pieces of broken beer and wine bottles from the street before I could park. "My God! Someone actually lives here?" I said. I know poverty well. It's an old friend. I remember the time I was doing special duty in Honduras. The Honduran children would follow the soldiers and airmen around begging for pennies. Children were paid by the club owners to bring the "Rich GIs" to their clubs. The children would then ask the service members for pennies for acting as their tour-guides. The experience left me heart broken. Once the children followed a group of us to a restaurant. Their little eyes watched and waited for us to finish eating. We had barely gotten up from our seats when the children raced to our plates and started fighting over our scraps. Once when we were helping Honduran families in a rural area, I saw houses with twenty or more people in them that were nothing but large cheap tents. The naked children drank and bathed in the same water from which their animals drank and bathed. But this wasn't Honduras, this was America.

I could smell a rancid odor coming from the house as I stepped onto the creaking porch that announced my presence before I got to the door. I held my breath and knocked through the bars that were guarding the door. In the window a dirty flowered-designed sheet hung in place of a curtain. I could see it moving even before I knocked on the door.

"Who is it?" I heard a weak voice say. I cleared my throat. "Ms. Franklin?" I said. "Are you Ms. Gertrude Franklin?" "Yes," she replied. I was sick to my stomach from the smell, but I smiled and tried to sound cheerful. "Hello Ms. Franklin. I am Mr. Alexander of Chivalry International Insurance Company. My company would like to express its sincere regret to you concerning the death of your

brother." "Thank you," she said as she continued to peek at me from behind that dirty sheet. "Ms. Franklin, your brother had a policy with my company, and he named you as the beneficiary of that policy. Ms. Franklin, I have a check in the sum of fifty-thousand dollars, and I need you to sign some papers before I can release it to you." She moved the sheet away from her face so that she could get a better look at me. "What? What did you say?" she asked. "I said that I have a claim check for you in the sum of fifty thousand dollars, but I need you to sign some papers."

The old lady must have had a hundred locks on her door. The clicking sounds of the locks seemed like they went on for hours, but finally the door opened. There wasn't much in her house that I could see. She had an old black and white miniature television that was sitting on an orange plastic milk crate in the corner of the room, a bridge table probably used for eating, a battered wood-burning stove, a folding chair, and an antique refrigerator. She was watching the news as if she needed to be reminded of the crimes that were going on right outside her door. She took the claim forms. "Do you have a pen?" she asked. I half smiled at her while handing her a pen. Without reading the forms she said, "Where do I sign?" I showed her where to sign on each page. She took the papers, placed them up against the wall just inside the door, and signed them. I Then reviewed the papers one at a time. "Everything looks okay. Here's your check." I know that even if she was sad about her brother dying, she must have felt like she had just won the lottery. I said, "Well, thank you for your time. Good-bye." I then smiled, then turned to leave. "Good-bye," she said. I heard the door locks rattle as I stood on the porch. "I hope she moves," I said. "Maybe she will even do me a favor and burn this dump down before she leaves," I remember thinking.

I looked across the yard at children playing in the streets, dodging cars for recreation. The squirrels, deer, rabbits, snakes, and opossums have been exchanged for mechanical animals with names like Cougar, Jaguar, Eagle, and Rabbit. My paradise is full of highways where vicious mechanical animals are roaring wild. The people live in homes with bars on the doors and windows, which makes the houses look like cages. As I walked back to my car, I stepped in some dog waste. I looked at the sky and yelled, "I hate this place."

THE END



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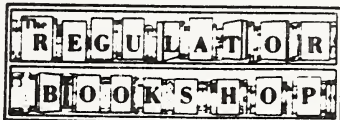
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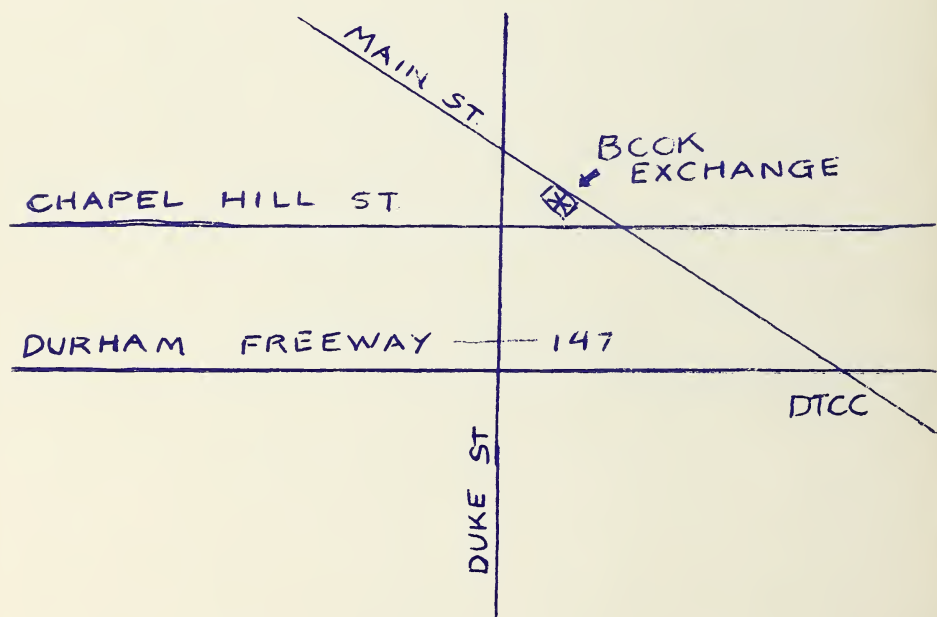




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